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**SOCIAL PROTECTION AND MIGRATION CONTROL:
THE CASE OF MIGRANT CARE WORKERS AND PARISIAN WELFARE HOTELS**

Abstract:

This article aims to bypass polarized debates that either accuse migrants of abusing state forms of social protection or accuse states of excluding migrants from welfare provisions. It seeks to do so by analysing the intersection of formal and informal forms of social protection. By formal social protection, the article means social services provided by the state. ‘Informal social protection’ is used to refer to support mechanisms among family and social networks. Taking as a point of departure the housing strategies of migrant (care) workers and migrant families in Paris, the article is based on semi-directed, open-ended interviews with migrant (care) workers, migrant families, hotel managers and social workers, as well as on participant observations of migrant families during clandestine visits in so called welfare hotel. By exploring the operational dynamics of welfare hotels, the article illustrates how formal social protection schemes can isolate migrant women from their social networks. The article concludes by stressing the need to think about the social protection for migrant (care) workers in a way that allows both for informal and transnational protection mechanisms.

Keywords:

Migration control, social protection, transnationalism, welfare hotel, shelter

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SOCIAL PROTECTION AND MIGRATION CONTROL: THE CASE OF MIGRANT CARE WORKERS AND PARISIAN WELFARE HOTELS

As women in wealthier countries have been leaving their homes to take part in paid employment, migrants from poorer countries have left their own homes to work in those of these women. These migrant care workers, just as other migrants face the need to arrange for shelter in their new places of residence and work. At times these shelter arrangements are provided by the state – and in France more particularly in the form of room allocations in welfare hotels. The main clientele of welfare hotels are not tourists, but instead non-profit organisations, called social platforms, which provide publicly funded social services to homeless people.¹ People in need of shelter can call the emergency hotline number ‘115’ to request emergency shelter in welfare hotels.

Since the late 1980s, welfare hotels have been the standard way in which the Parisian public authorities have sheltered homeless people. By 80% publicly funded, the Samu Social is the biggest social platform providing shelter in welfare hotels. In Paris, the Samu Social provides on average shelter to 16,000 people every night (Samu Social de Paris 2011: 63) and spends over €8 million on hotel accommodation each month. Such public spending fuels debates about the need for restrictive immigration policies to defend the welfare state.

Migrant women themselves also reflect on the public money that flows into shelter arrangements: “I know it’s not small money they pay for this place. But if you’re paying this kind of money, you can make sure the people inside are OK.” Gift is from Nigeria and has been living in welfare hotels since she arrived from Italy in November 2011.² After a few initial moves between hotels, Gift had again had to move hotels on several occasions since giving birth to her second son. She considers that the French state is “wasting money” because people in emergency shelter arrangements, such as welfare hotels, are nonetheless “suffering and living like animals”. Residents living in welfare hotels frequently complain about having to move, time and time again, from one hotel to another. Gift also told me that she sometimes felt like she was living in a “prison”. Officially, as in most welfare hotels, she is not allowed to receive visitors or to use an electric stove to cook food in her room. As few welfare hotels have communal kitchens, families in welfare hotels are often left without any means to prepare food.

Public debates are polarized between those that accuse states of excluding and not providing sufficient social protection for migrants and those that see migrants as a burden on the welfare state. The defence of the welfare state against fraud currently legitimates heightened migration control (Spire 2008: 52). Although French families can access accommodation, rather than mere shelter,

¹ The lack of specialized accommodation in Paris means that organizations supporting asylum seekers also regularly have to rely on welfare hotels

² All names have been replaced by pseudonyms.

based on social criteria, some argue that the French state's provision of social protection to migrants is at the expense of nationals. At the same times as the Samu Social is publicly accused by the Ministry of Economics and Finance's internal audit service of having mismanaged public money, other voices deplore that living conditions of people that do have access to welfare hotels.

This article takes the housing strategies of migrant (care works) and migrant women in welfare hotels as a point of departure to analyse tensions between social protection and migration control. The article is based on the working assumption that we can only understand how migration and social protection intersect if we take seriously the perspective of migrants, as well as the ways in which their practices intersect with the regulatory regimes of markets, families and states. Consequently, the article does not presuppose that states are the prime and sole providers of shelter, but openly examines the place of states, families and market providers of shelter. The article asks two main questions: What types of shelter arrangements have (undocumented) migrant care workers themselves established so as to shelter themselves? How do state provided forms of shelter intersect with these arrangements and migrants' social networks more broadly speaking?

After a discussion of its research methodology, the article opens with an overview of scholarly debates on social protection, migration control and transnationalism. By illustrating how institutional priorities of formal social protection mechanisms discriminate against migrant women with children and partners, the first empirical section of the article suggests that welfare hotels feed into the production of mono-parental families. By illustrating how shelter in welfare hotels also constitutes a form of social and mobility control, the article suggests in the next section that welfare hotels make it more difficult for migrant families to rely on support from family circles and other social networks. In a third empirical section, the article traces care chains and social protection mechanisms beyond the borders of the French welfare state.

Research methodology: welfare hotels and migrant care providers

The article is based on ethnographic observations during visits with migrant families in seven welfare hotels, as well as on semi-directed, open-ended interviews with employees of various social platforms and twelve migrants from Cameroon working in the care sector. So as to generate multi-layered and thick data, I used research with residents and hotel staff at two welfare hotels where I had sufficiently good entry points to combine the perspectives of inhabitants and managers. As visits to welfare hotels are highly regulated, my informants mostly suggested smuggling me into their rooms without formal prior authorisation by the respective hotel managers. The clandestine nature of my hotel visits is mostly a result of my choice to give priority to the study of the experiences of migrant women. I started my research with entry points and informal introductions to migrant women in welfare hotels, who would then in turn introduce me to their hotel managers.

Not being introduced to the migrant women by the hotel managers enabled better rapport and trust and steered me somewhat more clear from being another layer of control for the women. As the women were used to transgressing hotel rules, risks for them were minimal.

The article juxtaposes the experiences of West African migrant women (mostly Cameroonian and Nigerian) who had lived or were living in welfare hotels with the experiences of Cameroonian women and one Cameroonian man who had never lived in such hotels. Cameroonians constitute an increasingly significant, but also progressively more feminine immigrant community in France (Bouly de Lesdain 1999, Barou 2002: 12-13; Thierry 2001: 439).³ The interviews outside welfare hotels were conducted with migrant women providing paid or unpaid care, either as domestic workers, auxiliary nurses or family members. With regard to paid care work, Cameroonian migrant women in Paris mostly work in care for the elderly. The interviews focused on the experiences of such Cameroonian care providers as an example of other undocumented migrants from West Africa performing care work in the informal economy (Baron *et al* 2011: 100-123). Although public policies in France have granted tax exemptions designed to promote formal employment in the care sector, care work in the informal economy has continued (Scrinzi 2009), with migrant women in welfare hotels often caring for the elderly or for children in return for payment.

All the interviews were based on prior contacts and snowballing within migrant networks in Paris. I selected information rich cases and sought to capture a great variety of experiences, rather than a representative sample. While the legal situations of the migrants in this article varied, they had all been living in France without valid residence permits during substantial parts of their migration trajectories. The material of this article is only based on one study site, namely Paris.

Social protection and migration control in a transnational world

Movements across borders are a crucial mode for addressing livelihood insecurities (Sabates-Wheeler and Waite 2003) and global inequalities (Faist 2013: 1640-1). As migration control creates obstacles for the transnational flow of people, a change in migration policies could potentially lead to more human development than development initiatives themselves are able to create (Bakewell 2008: 1355). Migration policies however have remained restrictive despite both a surge in the faith in migration and development nexus (Nyberg Sørensen, 2012) and a demand for migrant workers in sectors, such as health, social care, hospitality, food production, construction and agriculture (Ruhs and Anderson 2010). The resulting illegality has a huge impact on social interactions and livelihood strategies of undocumented migrants (Sigona 2012, Bloch, Sigona and Wetter 2011) and by consequence the social protection of their family members in countries of origin.

³ Between 1994 and 1999, the numbers of Cameroonians entering French territory more than doubled.

Scholars focusing on migration and social policy have identified whether and how migrants have been granted social rights by different legal, bureaucratic and political actors (Guiraudon 2000, Bommers and Geddes 2000; North, de Wenden and Taylor 1987, Sainsbury 2012). The body of literature on citizenship and on the confines of legitimate welfare recipients has tended, however, to overlook the important role played by migrant care workers (including those working as domestic workers or nurses and family migrants) in sustaining welfare policies (Ambrosini 2013). Although feminist literature on care workers abundantly illustrates migrants' close involvement in providing care in their countries of residence (Lutz 2008, Marchetti and Venturini 2014, Shutes and Chiatti 2012, van Hooren 2012, Williams 2009), such authors have until now paid somewhat less attention to the care needs of migrants upon retirement and their family members in countries of origin (Hochschild 2000, Parreñas 2005, Yeates 2009, van Walsum and Alpes 2014).

Scholars focusing on human rights have paid attention to the basic needs of migrant (care) workers and argued for them to be included in the social protection systems of their countries of residence and work (Bosniak 2008, Carens 2008, Dembour 2011, Math and Toullier 2003-2004). Yet this body of literature neglects the fact that migrants can build safety mechanisms beyond government-sponsored insurance systems. Migrant workers' salaries and the resulting remittances are an important source of transnationally provided social protection for families of migrants in countries of origin (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004, Carling 2007, Boccagni 2011). Migrants can furthermore secure their future well-being by, for example, joining communal saving schemes or other informal insurance arrangements (Mazzucato 2009), by participating in transcontinental commerce (Ganga Bazenguissa 2000), by sending home second-hand cars (Beuving 2006) and by building homes in their villages of origin (Smith and Mazzucato 2009; Ndjio 2009). All of these activities constitute informal sources of social protection for migrants and their family networks.

It becomes possible to see cross-border activities of migrants as forms of social protection only if we overcome the methodological nationalism in the way we approach both people's lives and the role of the nation state in these trajectories (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). Through their work on social network and multi-level relational analysis, scholars of transnationalism have opened up new insights into how migrants and their social networks interact across state borders (Basch et al 1994, Faist 2000, Glick Schiller et al 1992, Levitt 2001, Mahler 2000, Portes et al. 1999, Mazzucato 2007). Despite some more recent calls to pay attention to "regimes of mobility" (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2012: 189) and changing institutions (Faist 2010), transnational studies have under-theorized legal regimes and state actors that delineate the possibilities for trans-border interactions in important ways (Meagher 2005).

The article's attempt in trying to push ahead these debates is to add an analysis that considers both informal and formal sources of social protection in interaction with each other.

‘Social protection’ is understood in its broadest sense as meaning arrangements that provide cover for basic needs (such as health, housing and care), as well as protection against poverty and old age. By formal social protection, I mean social services provided by the state. In line with the global trend of privatizing the welfare state (Marwell 2004), these social services may be delivered through private market actors, while nevertheless being funded from the public purse. ‘Informal social protection’ is used to refer to support mechanisms among family and social networks. These informal support mechanisms may both rely on or avoid market actors. Market based forms of informal social protection could for example consists of investing into housing schemes in migrants’ countries of origin or private insurance schemes for repatriating dead bodies. Informal social protection avoiding market actors, such as money transfer companies, may consist of cross-continental money circulation schemes based on trust among acquaintances. The nature of social networks is always necessarily ambivalent. Social networks can always function both as a source of social protection and a source of exploitation and vulnerability (Ives, Hanley, Walsh and Este 2014: 159-161, Price and Spencer 2015: 17). This article examines both instances.

Access to both formal and informal social protection can be facilitated by intermediaries, who find, create, block and propose alternative access points (Sabates-Wheeler and Macauslan 2007). In the field of migration policies, McKeown has traced how states have created the norm of the ‘free migrant’ as an autonomous individual making personal choices free of pressures from social networks or other intermediaries (2008). The production of this norm renders intermediaries and migrants’ social ties dubious. Debates on welfare fraud and migrant families need to be seen against the background of states’ individualizing intentions.

Informal shelter arrangements and access to welfare hotels

While traditionally providing shelter to single male French nationals (Damon 2001), the Samu Social saw an increase of 500% in the numbers of families requesting shelter between 1999 and 2009 (Le Méner and Oppenheim 2012: 89). Almost all these families are migrant families.⁴ In 2007, 75% of all migrant families in welfare hotels were from Africa (APUR 2007: 23). Contrary to other European countries, the provision of shelter through the free 115 hotline number of the Samu Social for homeless people in France is not conditional on their having a residence permit or an asylum request certificate. Regardless of their administrative status, parents with children under the age of eighteen are entitled to shelter (Le Méner and Oppenheim 2012: 84 & 91). Consequently, most families in welfare hotels are single-parent families headed by women without a residence permit.

⁴ In 2009, for example, fewer than 10% of families in temporary accommodation were French nationals (Guyavarch and Le Méner 2010: 19).

Although welfare hotels are overrun with requests for shelter, interviews with migrant care workers in Paris had not revealed welfare hotels as a key source of social protection. In what follows, the article draws on a series of life stories to illustrate how and why migrants shift between formal and informal forms of social protection.

The first day my Guinean informant Fatouma brought me to her hotel, we were told at the reception desk that visits were not allowed before 2 p.m. I had not even been in the hotel for 30 seconds before I was being told to leave. As it was only 11 a.m., Fatouma and I chose to wait in an annex of the hotel. Half of the annex contained three tables and a pile of chairs, while the other half was filled with about 40 prams. The welfare hotel residents call the annex the “pram lounge”, Fatouma sighed. The asylum support organization that had placed her in that hotel would soon be asking her to leave because her asylum request had been rejected. She told me that marriage and childbirth were the only two avenues left by which she could regularize her stay (Raissiguier 2010). Having been sexually abused by the military in her country of origin, she had no desire to go down either of those avenues.

In a welfare hotel with 62 rooms and 200 inhabitants, Fatouma was one of only three single women without children. Some 46% of the families staying in Samu Social welfare hotels were single parents (Samu Social de Paris 2011: 74). Fatouma asked her asylum support organization to provide her with shelter when she started working in welfare hotels as part of the Masters programme that she was following. Before moving to a welfare hotel, she had rented a small room from a fellow Guinean woman she had met by chance in an African neighbourhood of Paris.

Families play an important role in sheltering newly arrived migrants, at least temporarily. Many of the migrant women interviewed in this study had been able to borrow official documents from family members; these immediately allowed them to perform paid care work. While solidarity can function as an informal source of social protection, social ties and family networks are not necessarily based on trust and can be disappointing and exploitative (Meagher 2005). This is because, in return for providing shelter, family members may expect newly arrived migrants to provide child care for them without pay.

The 50-year-old Cameroonian Reine, for example, had had to look after the children of her niece Josianne in France for two years without pay. During this period, Reine was housed and fed, while she sometimes also received €50 or a metro ticket. Josianne once also paid half of the tuition fees for Reine’s son, who was at medical school in Cameroon. Josianne was happy to have her children looked after and provided no support or information to Reine on how she could improve her situation. When the daughter of a friend from Cameroon suggested that Reine should register for the basic medical insurance that the state provides to anyone who has been in France for longer than three months (i.e. *aide médicale de l’état*), Josianne became angry with Reine and a conflict

broke out. Apart from basic emergency healthcare, the *aide médicale de l'état* is also a very useful way for undocumented migrants to prove their presence on French territory. A few months after registering for health insurance, Reine was forced to leave her niece's home. Fortunately, however, the same Cameroonian friend helped Reine to find paid care work and to move to a small room of her own.

The provision of unpaid care by undocumented migrants is one of the ways in which pressure on the French welfare state can be reduced. Paulina's case illustrates how undocumented migrants play a crucial role in providing unpaid care to family members with residence permits and even to those with French nationality. Paulina came to France with the help of a migration broker paid for by her elder sister, Agatha. Paulina's son had French nationality, but had to stay in Cameroon with his father, who did not want him to leave. Paulina started caring for elderly people by using the residence and work permit of her elder sister, who was ill and had no children of her own to take care of. Together, Paulina and Agatha provided shelter and unpaid care for their niece, Agnès. The latter had French nationality and came to France at the age of thirteen with the help of her father, who later mistreated her. Despite her entitlement, as a French national, to specialized residential care, Agnès moved into the apartment of her two aunts.

When Paulina's son was finally allowed by his father to come to France, Paulina was *de facto* caring for two French nationals, despite not having a residence or work permit herself. When Agatha died, Paulina had to leave the home where she had been staying with her son and her niece because the rental contract had been in Agatha's name. Through the friend of a cousin, they found an apartment that they could sub-rent informally. Despite the loss of the cover that had been provided by her sister's documents, Paulina was able to continue working for her employers. Although Paulina's migration trajectory was not sanctioned by the state authorities in the form of a residence permit, her move to France allowed her not only to send remittances to family members in Cameroon, but also to care for her elder sister until the latter's death, as well as for two children of French nationality.

Whether migrants can stay with family members upon arrival in France depends on the strength and closeness of their ties (Timéra 2000). Migrants' housing arrangements both express and alter family norms and formations. Marriage and childbirth, in particular, are crucial events in terms of changing needs and opportunities. After spending five weeks with her cousin, the 30-year-old Cameroonian migrant woman Myriam was told to leave the apartment by her cousin's French husband. Unable to provide direct shelter, her cousin paid for a hotel room where Myriam could stay for two weeks. After then paying for a hotel for a few months at her own expense, Myriam started a relationship with a French man whom she later married. By the time they divorced, Myriam was sufficiently well settled to find rooms she could sub-rent informally through

acquaintances. Although Myriam's informal rent was higher than the official rent paid to the landlord, she preferred not to go to a welfare hotel. When a pregnant cousin of Myriam was thrown out of her marital home by her French husband, Myriam agreed to let her stay in her informally rented room. Myriam told me that the Samu Social welfare hotels are too hard to bear because you have to move to a different shelter every other night. She did not want her pregnant cousin to have to do that. However, although Myriam was able to provide accommodation for her cousin during her pregnancy, her home was too small also to accommodate a child. After her cousin had given birth, Myriam therefore asked her to contact the Samu Social, which then housed her in a series of different welfare hotels over the next two years.

The above cases illustrate that welfare hotels are often a last resort for migrants seeking shelter.⁵ Migrant women often experience a series of more or less problematic shelter arrangements before circumstances push them to rely on welfare hotels. Samantha, for example, came to Germany as an au pair. In return for providing care, she was supposed to receive shelter, food and a monthly allowance of €250. Although she received her monthly allowance on an irregular basis, she did not complain as the employer in whose house she was living had confiscated her passport and birth certificate. Samantha was ultimately able to leave this employer with the help of someone in France who agreed to certify that she would employ her as an au pair. When Samantha arrived in Paris, she first stayed with this person and later with a friend of her father-in-law. The latter claimed to be her uncle when he introduced her to the other people with whom he was sub-renting an apartment. After this man sexually assaulted Samantha, she sought refuge in the room of another woman in the same apartment. This woman helped her to find a job in a beauty parlour where she could also sleep at night. Through a customer of the beauty parlour, Samantha eventually found a room to sub-rent. She earned €550 a month, of which she paid €250 to the 'aunt' she had met at the parlour. When Samantha later found a French boyfriend, she moved in with him, but did not tell him that she did not have a residence permit. That relationship fell apart after Samantha had become pregnant by this man. A customer at a restaurant where she was working told her that the Samu Social "takes pregnant women without papers".

Although the Samu Social's 115 hotline is officially supposed to be unconditionally available for anyone with a child under eighteen (DGCS 2010), the reality is somewhat different. Instead of using strict waiting lists or queues to manage their insufficient resources, staff at the call centre struggle to allocate rooms by giving priority to both the most vulnerable and to those considered the least excluded and thus the most likely to be able to reintegrate. (Le Méner 2011). As access to welfare hotels is partly conditional on being particularly vulnerable, it is better for women with children to call the 115 telephone service as single women and not as part of a couple.

⁵ For parallels in the U.K., see Price and Spencer 2015: 57.

Once most of the places have been allocated during the morning rush hour, hotline staff have to negotiate with the coordinator to see who will get the few remaining places before new rooms become available again at 7 p.m.

Bureaucratic definitions of who has priority in accessing welfare hotels substantially alter migrants' family formations and social ties. The father of a child living in a welfare hotel is only allowed to visit if he is officially registered as a resident in a welfare hotel. In welfare hotels, however, single women have priority over women with partners. Under certain circumstances, men can access accommodation schemes for migrant workers, called foyers. Foyers function in a similarly isolating manner and only accept only single men without families (Sayad 1980). As a result, a father can find himself living in a foyer in one part of town, while the mother of his child is living in a welfare hotel in another part of town. Formal forms of social protection can at times isolate migrants from their social networks. In what follows, the article analyses internal contradictions in formal forms of social protection and their impact on migrants and their families.

Policy contradictions and repercussions for informal social protection

Although migrant families sometimes live for up to three or four years in welfare hotels, they frequently have to move from hotel to hotel. Some migrant families have to move hotel three or four times a year, while others may even move every other week. What is the reason for these moves? And what are the repercussions for the social ties of migrant families accommodated in such hotels?

Tensions between migration control and social policies play a crucial role in determining the actual well-being of migrant families (Price and Spencer 2015). On the one hand, any homeless person – regardless of their legal status – has a legal right to accommodation in France. On the other hand, migration policy is geared towards expelling people who do not have residence permits. The contradictions between migration policy and social policy have resulted in perverse situations, which have an adverse effect both on the living conditions of migrant families and on public spending. Welfare hotels are a very costly way of providing shelter. Depending on whether hotel managers charge per night or per month, and on whether they charge per person or per room, shelter in a welfare hotel costs between €700 and €2,000 a month, and sometimes even as much as €3,000.

Although actors in the field of social policy are trying to move away from hotels and to more stable housing solutions, such moves are difficult in a context where even a centre-left government cannot be seen to be giving housing to undocumented migrant families. Cheaper solutions would require public authorities to acknowledge the enduring nature of irregular migration. While more expensive than other forms of shelter, one advantage of hotel rooms is that their inhabitants do not acquire formal rights to residency or social housing. By providing shelter in

welfare hotels, the state is able to maintain the illusion that it is reacting only in response to an emergency. This illusion comes at a cost, however, that is both financial and human.

Social actors involved with homeless people, as well as with migrant populations, are very concerned by the negative repercussions that regularly having to move from hotel to hotel has on migrants' access to formal social protection. The biggest concern among advocates of migrants' social rights relates to their access to schooling and healthcare facilities (Le Méner and Oppenchaim 2012: 99). Ironically, access to these formal types of social protection can indirectly also feed into migrant families' enforced mobility between welfare hotels, and thus further enforce their vulnerability. The tensions are particularly crystallized by the issue of access to education for children living in welfare hotels, and this often brings social platforms into conflict with local authorities.⁶

Social platforms such as the Samu Social often have branches in various cities and districts. The Samu Social of Paris receives the highest number of shelter requests and is unable to place all migrant families within its own constituency. Local authorities in cities outside Paris that are requested to place migrant families complain that they are not financially compensated by the municipality of Paris for having to provide education facilities for higher numbers of children. Transforming a tourist hotel into a welfare hotel may mean that a municipality or other local authority also has to set up new classes in order to accommodate children from welfare hotels.

As a result of their reluctance to incur such additional public spending, local authorities have become increasingly active in inspecting safety standards and fire regulations. If a hotel is found to have breached any of the multiple sets of regulations, it can be closed down by the city council for months and sometimes even years. And that, in turn, results in migrant families having to move to yet another different hotel, often in a different district.

At other times, tensions between social and migration policies are resolved less elegantly. A social policy actor within a national federation for the homeless told me that migrant families in welfare hotels were sometimes directly instructed by social platforms not to apply for any social services within the hotel's local community. Local authorities have been known to complain to social platforms when migrant families breach these instructions, and this in turn can result in the migrant families being expelled from their hotels.

Migrant families can also find themselves expelled directly by hotel managers for 'bad behaviour'. The likelihood of such an expulsion depends entirely on the disposition of the hotel managers. One hotel manager I talked to owns eight hotels and, on average, expels one family a week. Another hotel receptionist I talked to had only expelled one family over a total of nine

⁶ For tensions in the U.K. between accommodation in Bed and Breakfast facilities and the welfare of children, see Price and Spencer 2015.

months. The reasons for expulsions can range from the consumption of drugs to repeated breaking of hotel rules, such as washing your laundry in the hotel bathroom.

Shelter arrangements in welfare hotels also function as a form of social control (Aumercier 2004). Historically, issues of public order, and in particular public health, have been at the origins of state intervention in the domain of shelter arrangements for migrants (Lévy-Vroelant 2004: 151). The 115 reservations platform, for example, has a file for each user; these files contain data on the individual's situation, including details of forthcoming medical appointments. Welfare hotel residents are expected to call 115 regularly. Sometimes, the 115 platform may notify hotel managers that certain families are no longer eligible for shelter. These notifications also serve to discipline migrant families into calling and providing updates on their current situation. The Cameroonian migrant woman Samantha regarded the Samu Social as "part of the police".

The control that is exerted on the social behaviour and mobility on migrant women in welfare hotels also indirectly hinders them from accessing more informal sources of social protection. Regular moves from hotel to hotel, as well as strict visitor regulations, restrict the capacity of migrant women in welfare hotels to form new or maintain pre-existing social networks. Migrant women in welfare hotels can find themselves constrained in their ability, for example, to engage in courtship.⁷ Foyers and welfare hotels rarely allow visits during the day and totally forbid overnight visits, while residents are *de facto* obliged to return to their hotel each night. Residents who do not use their hotel room for a night are officially supposed to reimburse the Samu Social for the costs of that night in the hotel.

Rules at welfare hotels are multi-layered and largely interpreted by the hotel managers themselves. When I first meet Gift, the Nigerian woman whose quote opens the article, she was accompanied by her two children aged five and one and her Nigerian friend Stella. As we approached the Algerian restaurant belonging to the hotel, Gift asked me whether the hotel manager knew I was coming. In principle, she was not allowed to receive me in her room. For the past ten days, however, she had allowed Stella to stay in her room. Stella was one of three Nigerian women that I met who had all worked in Italy before coming to France during the final months of their pregnancy. As Gift was used to evading hotel rules, she did not hesitate for long and indicated I should go up the staircase. Throughout the day, I was afraid of being caught as an illegal visitor and did not leave the room much.

The hotel was relatively dirty, sparsely furnished and clearly a transient place. Gift's room was about 9m² and contained a microwave, a kettle, a fridge, a cupboard, a bed for three people and a small table. Toilets and shower facilities on each of the two floors were shared. The hallway was 'decorated' with fire extinguishers, security regulations and letters to the inhabitants detailing the

⁷ For a broader picture on connections between homelessness and sexuality, see also Oppenchain *et al* 2010.

hotel rules. Gift would have liked a bigger room, but did not want to change hotels because this one – unusually – had a communal, albeit small, kitchen. She and her new-born baby's father, a French national of Togolese origin, were no longer a couple, but still at times in contact with each other.

While migrant women in welfare hotels are subject to a great deal of control, these hotels can also end up functioning as a resource for informal types of social protection. Thanks to her welfare hotel, Gift had become a broker for shelter arrangements. Her formal housing arrangements allowed her to provide informal support to Stella, whom she knew from her time in Italy. Stella had previously called 115, but was still waiting to be allocated a hotel. During her stay at Gift's place, Stella helped to take care of Gift's baby when Gift took her elder son to school.

As we left the hotel after a long day of cooking, discussing and eating, Gift bumped into the hotel receptionist on the street. She told him that she was going to have her hair done later that day. As we walked off, she explained to me that she was "preparing his mind" for the idea that she would be having a visitor in her room that night. Gift was taking a risk for herself and her children in providing shelter to another person in her room and thus breaking hotel regulations.

Visits to welfare hotels are highly regulated because of fire regulations, but also because hotel owners are *de facto* assumed to be responsible for any sex work occurring within their establishments. In hotels that only partly cater for 'social clients', migrant women can at times offer sexual services to other clients at the hotel. While visits to welfare hotels are highly regulated, the exact contours of what is or is not allowed are left almost exclusively to the discretion of the hotel staff. When I spoke to the same hotel receptionist a few weeks later, he told me that residents in his hotel were entitled to receive visitors. I was astonished. He then added that although residents in the hotel had the right to receive visitors, whether that right was allowed to be exercised depended on him: "They have the right.... It depends on me".

Upon close examination, evidence of the anti-migration climate in France is tangibly felt in the form of conflicts between actors in charge of welfare hotels, as well as in the social organization of the welfare hotels themselves. Implicit in the regular moves between welfare hotels is also the idea that these reduce migrant women's dependence on shelter in welfare hotels. Many of the control mechanisms at play in these shelter arrangements are not necessarily specific to migrants. In many ways, migration control is all about control of the global poor (Anderson 2013), with the notion of 'emergency', for example, also dominating shelter arrangements for homeless French nationals (Brunetaux 2007).

The need for transnational forms of social protection

At a time when social rights for citizens are becoming increasingly fragmented, Faist has called for a study of how these rights intersect with what he refers to as the transnational social question

(2009: 29). Citizens and migrants share more experiences of economic marginalisation than public debate allows us to immediately grasp (Anderson 2013). When thinking about ways of regulating migration and social protection, it is thus important to think outside the territorial box of the nation state. As people “forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton-Blanc, 1994: 7), their needs for social protection evolve, too. The below case of Samantha illustrates how citizens and migrants are bound to one another for care arrangements and access to social protection.

Just like many other migrant (care) workers, Samantha has made important contributions to the social protection of families in Europe by performing both paid and unpaid care work for French nationals. Samantha left the insecurity of life in Cameroon at the age of 21 to work as an au pair in Germany. She later moved to France and started working as a care worker – babysitting and collecting children from school – while still living in a welfare hotel. These days, she is in social housing and undergoing training to become a kindergarten assistant. Although she occasionally babysits for her former employers, her work is not officially declared.

Samantha’s life trajectory also shows how migration can turn individuals into sources of social protection for family members back home. Samantha’s younger brother and sister in Cameroon benefited, for example, from the money she sent them for their studies. Samantha’s next aim is to set up a small business for her mother so that she would not have to send as much money to Cameroon. She also wants to reduce her care responsibilities so that she could start thinking about her own situation, including the question of a possible return to Cameroon upon her retirement.

Samantha’s case illustrates how social protection does not stop at national borders, neither for her family in Cameroon, nor for the French families for whom she provided child care. If family ties increasingly extend across borders, so, too, will social protection mechanisms need to be thought of in a transnational framework. Other examples of migrants’ care arrangements and social protection mechanisms in this study further underline the need to think of social protection in a transnational manner.

While the daily struggle for their own and their family’s development did not allow all migrant (care) workers of this study to foresee how they would care for themselves at times of old age, some had explicit plans for retirement. Aware of not being able to sustain their physically challenging work indefinitely, they expressed the need to open up businesses in Cameroon to complement their pension entitlements (which after years of informal work are usually too low for survival in France), their need for free travel back to France to be able to access both pension payments and medical care, as well their need for independent and appropriate housing during old age. While occasionally already tied into housing schemes in their country of residence, many

migrant (care) workers in this study intended to invest their savings into apartments and houses in their country of origin.

Housing investments can be a crucial source of social protection upon retirement. In seeking to carry out these investments in their countries of origin, migrant (care) workers face fears of being duped by their family, high costs for money transfers and the challenge of being physically too far removed to oversee construction works on a daily basis. Investments into housing schemes and businesses in countries of origin both require migrants to be able to wire money in between countries and continents. While tax reductions for formally sent remittances can enable migrants own initiatives, informal money sending schemes remain popular because of punitive fees of transfer companies. In the wake of counter-terrorism schemes, informal money transfer arrangements have increasingly become the subject of regulation and control. State regulation of financial flows can constitute a hurdle for migrants' investment projects for their retirement.

The example of housing investments for retirement illustrates how transnational social protection can at times be facilitated simply by doing away with structural constraints that block flows of people and things between countries and continents. Factoring mobility into our thinking on social protection allows us to see beyond the nation state as the only and exclusive source of social protection. In the Philippines, India and Bangladesh, for example, migrant associations have set up transnational and informal social protection schemes for migrants (Sabates-Wheeler and Waite 2003: 61).

Conclusion

The Nigerian woman quoted at the start of the article highlighted a paradox: Why does the French state commit large amounts of money to providing a system of shelter in which people are subjected to constant relocations and where they are unable to receive visitors or cook? One of the reasons for this social policy field's failure to provide satisfactory shelter arrangements at a reasonable cost to the public purse relates to the lack of political will to acknowledge the presence of migrant families in France as anything but a temporary phenomenon. Public debates on migrants' abuse of European welfare states see migrants as individuals who have come to Europe to create families, rather than as individuals with family members in their countries of nationality and who come to support families in Europe by caring for children and the elderly.

If welfare hotels do not result in the provision of satisfactory shelter arrangements, the question arises as to what they produce in the form of corollary policy outcomes? As Ferguson argues, we need to take policy failures seriously, not because of what they fail to deliver, but instead because of the effects of their failure (Ferguson 1990). Welfare hotels provide shelter primarily to single-parent families headed by women. By illustrating how institutional priorities

discriminate against migrant mothers with partners, the article suggests that welfare hotels feed into the production of mono-parental families. By illustrating how shelter in welfare hotels also constitutes a form of social and mobility control, the article furthermore suggests that welfare hotels make it more difficult for migrant families to rely on support from their family circles and other social networks. Thus welfare hotels' disciplinary logics are in line with the individualizing effects of migration control; the latter promotes the myth of autonomous individuals, while criminalizing forms of non-state mediation.

In his book *The Price of Rights*, Ruhs claims that a liberalization of labour immigration policies in high-income countries is incompatible with equal rights for migrant workers. Interestingly, parallel studies on shelter arrangements for migrants in the Netherlands and the U.K. already illustrate the emergence of a parallel welfare system (Price and Spencer 2015, Leekers forthcoming). Based on an understanding of well-being and development that goes beyond access to formal rights, Ruhs furthermore argues that "it is not surprising to see migrant workers making 'sacrifices' in some dimensions of development (e.g. limited access to some legal rights) in exchange for advancing others (e.g. opportunities to access employment at higher wages and raise the household incomes of their families)."⁸ The findings of this article suggest that formal access rights to social protection can also come at a social cost to migrants and their family networks. The sacrifices of migrants to be able to access employment in high-income countries could be reduced by taking a more enabling approach towards migrants' own initiatives – many of which are based on existing social networks and thus fundamentally transnational in nature.

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⁸ Ruhs, M., *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*, Princeton University Press: 153.

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